

Breaking Down the **BARRIERS**

PUBLISHED BY ALBERTA TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

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Living In The Community Documents Available



The Alberta Interdepartmental Working Group on Accessible Transportation has prepared a Policy Statement on the implications of the general move to community based living as it relates to accessible public transportation services — particularly in the regionalized social service and health-care sectors.

The working group is made up of representatives from Alberta Infrastructure(Chair); Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities; Alberta Human Resources and Employment; Alberta Community Development; Alberta Municipal Affairs and Alberta Health and Wellness.

The group has prepared two documents:

- ***Living in the Community: Encouraging Adequate Public Transportation Links*** — a policy statement aimed at encouraging the full consideration of public transportation needs **before** programs are implemented
- ***CHECKLISTS for Policy Makers and Planners*** — outlining key areas that policy makers and planners should consider when introducing a new

program, or altering an existing service.

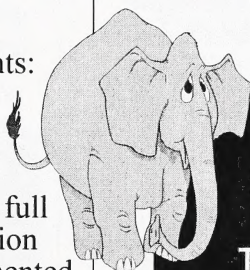
For further information on both documents contact:

Sara Wong
Policy Development
Alberta Infrastructure
Phone: (780) 427-9781

Or, check out the documents at Alberta Infrastructure's website at
<http://www.tu.gov.ab.ca>

DON'T FORGET

Check out the recent updates on the Alberta Inter-community Public Transportation Guide at
<http://www.tu.gov.ab.ca>



towards a society for all ages

Alberta Infrastructure's International Year of Older Persons (IYOP) website is now up and running at **<http://www.tu.gov.ab.ca>**. This website describes Alberta Infrastructure's overall mandate and relationship to IYOP; tips for maintaining driver health (concentrating on seniors); and Alberta Infrastructure's efforts in improving accessibility for older persons.

Profile -- Member of the Advisory Committee on Barrier-Free Transportation



Name: Lorraine Card

Occupation: Manager, Safety and Driver Administration, Greyhound Canada Transportation Corporation

How did you become interested in transportation issues?

During my previous position of National Manager, Customer Service for Greyhound Canada, I had the opportunity to discuss with many passengers their experiences while travelling via inter-city coach. My present position as a Manager in the Safety and Driver Development side of the company involves the development and implementation of training programs for new and existing drivers.

With the arrival of wheelchair accessible coaches, the company introduced a Sensitivity Awareness Program to ensure that employees are able to meet the needs of all passengers. We encourage trainers across Canada to invite a representative from the Canadian Paraplegic Association to discuss various mobility aids, as well as the best way to accommodate people with disabilities.

As my experience with Greyhound grew, my interest in various transportation issues grew also. It seems that knowledge in any area, at least for my part, develops a thirst for more knowledge.

What is your role on the committee and why did you become involved?

I have attended barrier-free meetings as a Greyhound representative and on behalf of inter-city coach operators since 1995. My participation in these meetings, as well as

my experience at Greyhound, served to increase my own awareness of the obstacles facing persons with disabilities on a daily basis.

The ability to move freely is something most of us take for granted. Not until we lose some of that freedom, usually in the form of a sprained ankle or broken leg, do we really begin to appreciate how difficult very simple tasks can become. This increased awareness has made me realize that society has a responsibility to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities and thus provide freedom of movement for all.

My position with Greyhound provides me with the opportunity to help make a difference, both through education and in increased accessibility to our facilities and equipment. The committee provides the necessary framework to discuss various initiatives and the impact those initiatives will have on government, industry, and consumers. As a member of the committee, I have the opportunity to gain, as well as impart, knowledge and hopefully, through the committee, affect change.

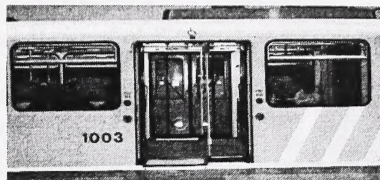
What are the major concerns or issues you have related to accessible transportation?

Society is becoming more aware of the needs of persons with disabilities. Throughout our training programs, we have focused on transportation and freedom of

movement as a right, not a privilege. All Canadians should have access to the nation's transportation systems. From Greyhound's perspective, as a transporta-

tion provider, it is discouraging to note the infrequency with which our accessible coaches are being utilized. Hopefully, we can all work together to turn this around.

More LRT Cars Equipped with Accessibility Ramps

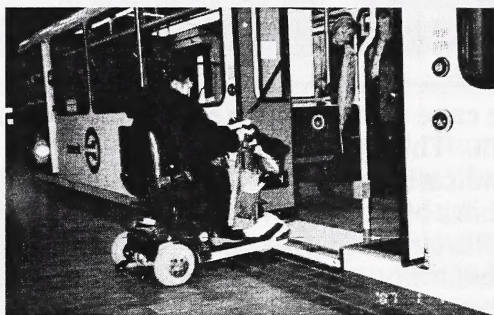


Edmonton Transit System (ETS) is increasing the number of cars equipped with accessibility ramps on its Light Rail Transit (LRT) line.

Funding has recently been received to equip ETS light rail vehicles with ramps. Installation is currently under-

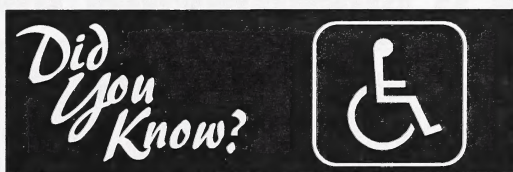
way and it is expected that one vehicle per month will be ready for operational service. The fleet retrofit program is expected to continue over the next three years. By the end of 2001, all cars will have an access ramp.

The new ramp-equipped vehicles will help alleviate scheduling and availability problems that resulted when there was only one ramp-equipped car in operation.



For further information contact:

David Pagett,
Senior Electrical Equipment
Supervisor
The City of Edmonton,
Transportation Department
Edmonton Transit System,
LRT Section
Phone: (780) 496-4362



If you have questions or comments about Edmonton Transit System's (ETS) service or staff, you can contact their Comments and Concerns office at (780) 496-8900.

Would You Recognize These Symbols?

Did you know that there are symbols for visual and hearing impairments as well as for those requiring mobility devices?



Everyone knows the internationally recognized **blue wheelchair symbol**. The symbol is used to identify facilities within a building that are accessible to

persons seated in or using a mobility device.

The **cane symbol** represents visual impairment. This symbol is used to indicate that facilities within a building provide Braille aids to improve the accessibility of persons with visual impairments.



The international symbol

for deafness or hard of hearing is the **blue ear symbol**. The blue ear is used to indicate that facilities within a building are accessible to persons with



a hearing disability. For example, it is often used to identify telecommunication facilities that are accessible to persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

When EmployAbilities evaluated Gasoline Alley establishments in Red Deer for accessibility last year, it checked accessibility for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, but found no TTY or other devices. No Braille or other considerations were noticed either.

While the blue wheelchair symbol is well recognized, the needs of those with visual or hearing disabilities have not received the same high profile. Awareness is improving, thanks to the efforts of various advocacy groups.

For a copy of the Red Deer EmployAbilities report, please contact:

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Is it Impairments, Disabilities or Handicaps?

Ever wonder if you are using the right term, in the right circumstances? In 1980, the World Health Organization issued the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH). This has appeared in 15 languages and further versions are in preparation.

The classification refers to three concepts: impairments, disabilities, and handicaps defined as follows:

Impairment - "any loss or abnormality of a psychological, or anatomical structure or

function." Impairments are disturbances at the level of the organ.

Disability - "any restriction or inability (resulting from an impairment) to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal or within the range considered normal for a human being." This describes a functional limitation or activity restriction caused by an impairment.

Handicap - "any disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an

impairment or a disability, that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal for that individual." The classification of handicap involves circumstances that place individuals "at a disadvantage relative to their peers when viewed from the norms of society." It deals with the relationship that evolves between society, culture and people who have impairments or disabilities, as reflected in life roles.

This classification system is currently

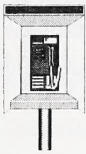
under review. Many countries, including Canada and the United States, are contributing to the development of the second official version of the ICIDH.

Reference: *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues*, (October 1998), 49 pp. Prepared by Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services. This report is available on the Internet at:

<http://socialunion.gc.ca>

Highway Signage and Call Boxes Installed

Alberta Infrastructure will be installing the wheelchair symbol on Gasoline Alley signs along the Red Deer corridor where businesses qualify. Adding the wheelchair symbol on community business signs, where appropriate, will improve highway signage for the benefit of Albertans with disabilities.



As a further aid to the general motoring public, roadside call boxes will be installed along Highway 2 by AlbertaMAS (Motorist Aid System). The call boxes will be located at 16 kilometre intervals, on alternating sides of the divided highway, along the Edmonton to Calgary corridor. Installation of the call boxes has already begun along the Ponoka interchange.

Each call box "pad" is fully accessible to users of mobility devices, and amplification is provided for the hard of hearing. (However, TTY is not provided.)

Fifteen call boxes have already been installed and are operating on Highway 1 between Banff National Park gate and Calgary. AlbertaMAS has an agreement with Alberta Infrastructure to install approximately 400 wireless solar powered call boxes along primary highways in the province within two years.

Corporate sponsors cover the capital and

operating costs of the system in return for the right to post an advertising panel below the call box identification sign. This sponsorship is important because it allows the emergency service calls to be offered at no cost to either the government or callers.

Along with alerting emergency crews, the call boxes can be used by motorists to report impaired drivers or others driving dangerously on Highway 2, for action by the RCMP.

For further information contact:

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Did You Know?

Alberta Infrastructure's Advisory Committee on Barrier-Free Transportation has provided

suggestions on a draft evaluation form for rest areas prepared by the former Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services (PWSS). The form will be used in the spring/summer to evaluate the accessibility of all rest area facilities in the province.

Accessible Taxi Service Provided to Edmonton Airports



Did you know that Edmonton Airports has agreements with three local taxi companies to provide accessible taxi service to the airports? The three companies are Co-op Taxi, Yellow Cab and Prestige Cabs. These taxi operators are required to provide accessible taxi service to the airports on 24 hours advance notice, although they can usually provide service within six hours. In the absence of advance notice, the taxi companies are required, under their agreements with Edmonton Airports, to provide accessible taxi service within two hours on demand.

These taxi companies also have an obligation to provide drivers with appropriate training to assist persons with disabilities. The training must be consistent with the federal regulations on Disability Awareness Training. Through the Edmonton Airports Barrier-Free Committee, a training program for drivers providing assistance for persons with disabilities is offered, but not mandatory. The taxi operators are required to provide an alternate training session in lieu of accessing this program.

Co-op Taxi, Yellow Cab, and Prestige Cabs are required to arrange for accessible taxi service between Edmonton International Airport and the downtown core for a \$35 maximum rate. Regular metered fares apply to all other areas.

For further information contact:

Diane Trenn
Ground Transportation
Edmonton Airports
Phone: (780) 890-8355



Edmonton International Airport's new parkade provides six parking stalls per level for persons with disabilities, with the exception of the first parkade level which is reserved for rental vehicles. These stalls are conveniently located next to the elevators and pedway.

Breaking Down the Barriers is published by Alberta Infrastructure to provide information about transportation issues of interest to persons with disabilities and related organizations. It is distributed to municipalities, service providers, provincial organizations and consumer groups in Alberta. To be added to the distribution list, phone (780) 427-7944 or dial 310-0000 for a toll free connection outside Edmonton.

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